



AMERICAN HERITAGE CENTER

*Many universities have special collections. Few have special collections as extensive and significant as the American Heritage Center (AHC). **The AHC is the University's repository of manuscript and special collections, rare books, and the university archives.** Internationally known for its historical collections the AHC first and foremost serves the students and other citizens of Wyoming. The AHC also sponsors a wide range of scholarly and popular programs including lectures, concerts, symposia, and exhibits. Access is free and open to all.*

The AHC was officially established in 1945. **In the decades that followed, nearly 90,000 cubic feet of historically important documents and artifacts were acquired.** The AHC is among the largest non-governmental archives in the nation, and between the Mississippi and the West Coast only the collections at the University of Texas—Austin compare in size and national importance.

AHC collections go beyond Wyoming's or the region's borders and support a wide range of research and teaching activities in the humanities, sciences, arts, business, and education.

- Major areas of the manuscript collections include Wyoming and the American West, the mining and petroleum industries, U.S. politics and world affairs, conservation, journalism, transportation, and 20th century entertainment such as popular music, radio, television, and film.
- The Toppan Library is the University of Wyoming's rare book center. The collections consist of more than 40,000 items, documenting the history of the book from medieval illuminated manuscripts to the 21st century. Subject strengths of the holdings include the American West, British and American literature, early exploration of North America, religion, hunting and fishing, natural history, women authors, and the book arts

The professional archivists and librarians at the AHC provide bibliographic instruction to **over 100 UW classes** annually, and work with UW faculty to develop projects for their students using AHC collections. **The AHC, in fact, is used more actively by undergraduates than similar repositories at such renowned universities as Yale, Princeton, Michigan, and Texas.**

Scholars and the public from across the nation and around the globe--last year from 48 states and 21 nations (including Australia, Germany, Botswana, Brazil and Russia)--also access the collections of the AHC. The total number of researchers and long-distance reference requests last year exceeded 8,000. In addition, the reference staff and the rare books curator gave over 100 public tours and informal public presentations.

The AHC is also home to educational programs like the Alan K. Simpson Institute for Western Politics and Leadership and the Wyoming History Day Program. Each year the AHC offers a variety of symposia, lectures, exhibits, and concerts that feature the AHC's collections for both a scholarly and public audience.

AHC web pages (www.uwyo.edu/ahc) received 126,117 visitors (962,794 page views) in 2002, seventh highest of all portions of the UW web site—more than any of the colleges and departments, more than Wyoming Public Radio, more even than the on-line staff directory. In addition, the section of our site on Fritz Lang was just named one of “Ten Cool Sites” by the San Francisco Exploratorium, which honors exceptional educational sites on the web.

The faculty of the AHC are regional and national leaders in their fields, speaking and publishing on historical, archival, and library topics.